



# THE SUMPTER MINER

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## SUMPTER-BOURNE ROAD

When the engineers employed last summer to re-survey the Sumpter-Bourne railway submitted to the Killen, Warner, Stewart company an estimate of probable cost, placing the figure at a quarter of a million dollars, Mr. Killen, somewhat surprised at the magnitude of the undertaking, inquired:

"Isn't it possible some way to cut down that estimate?"

"Certainly, sir," answered the chief engineer, "I can cut it down to any figure you desire; but this is the only estimate I will sign my name to."

Mr. Killen explained that the engineer had misunderstood him; he simply desired to know if the projected road couldn't possibly be constructed cheaper.

"No sir," said the engineer

That estimate, in detail, is now en route from Chicago to Sumpter, Mr. Killen having wired for it last week. It is expected to arrive tomorrow or Friday. The committee, Messrs. Johns, Gleason and Fuller, appointed by a citizens meeting Sunday night, will go over the figures contained in the estimate, verify their accuracy, and will then solicit subscriptions locally to \$20,000 worth of bonds, as per the terms of the Killen, Warner, Stewart company's offer, as outlined in yesterday's Miner.

Cato J. Johns, chairman of the committee, in conversation with a Miner reporter last evening, said that personally he believed the estimate fairly conservative. He pointed out that when the original survey for a railway from Sumpter to the Cracker Creek district was broached, the proposed upper terminal was at Hanover, five miles up the gulch. This route was purely a water grade, and an estimate of its probable cost was placed in one instance as low as \$65,000.

When, last summer, the K. W. S. company took up the proposition of connecting Sumpter with the upper camps by a rail line, they enlarged the original enterprise to include Bourne as the upper terminal, with a switchback leading directly to the E. & E. mine, thence over the hill to the basin between the Columbia and Golconda mines, with switchback

spurs to both of these properties, the North Pole mill to be on the main line from Hanover to Bourne. The object was to build direct to the ore bins of the big mines mentioned and also to attain such an elevation as to permit of a future extension on into the Silver Creek and Cable Cove districts. Those familiar with the Cracker Creek and Silver Creek water courses realize, no doubt, that a railway direct from Hanover up Silver Creek to Cable Cove is impossible, owing to the tremendous difference in elevation between the two points named and the short distance intervening.

The changed line, making Bourne the virtual terminal, with spurs as aforesaid, necessitated a re-survey of the original line above the Halfway house, requiring a heavier gradient and a consequent projection of the grade high above Powder, passing Halfway on the right side of the canyon at a considerable elevation above that point, landing in Bourne by an easy gradient, but along a dizzy grade along the mountain side. A continuation of the line, by switchback to the E. & E., thence to the Columbia basin, gains a still greater elevation, so that when the time comes for an extension to Cable Cove, the grade, starting from a high altitude, swings over into Silver Creek, following approximately the route of the present Golconda wood road, thence up the canyon by easy stages.

The originally projected line, with Hanover as the upper terminal, estimated to cost 65,000, was to have been five miles long. The newer project is to be eleven miles long. The original line followed Powder river, a natural water grade, with no trestle bridges and very few trestles. The \$65,000 estimate was for second-hand rails of light weight and second-hand rolling stock of the sort used by the Sumpter Valley road, purchased from discarded Union Pacific equipment. Such an estimate—\$65,000 for construction and equipment—was very conservative.

The new line, estimated to cost nearly four times as much as the old one, is, as aforesaid, no longer a water grade route after passing Halfway, at which point it begins to hug the rocky mountain side and climb toward the altitudinous terminal at Bourne. Deep rock cuts, high earthen embankments, dizzy trestles, etc., are some of the engineering difficulties encountered by the new line. The increased cost of constructing such a grade over the cost of constructing a roadbed along the flat bottom of the Powder river canyon, and the more than double length of the grade, accounts for the large difference between the two estimates.

Mine operators in Cracker Creek district, never looked kindly upon the original project. They calculated

that if they were compelled to haul ore from their mines to Hanover, an extra haul of five miles down the easy river road to Sumpter would cut but little figure. The new road, however, running as it will, to the chutes of their ore bins, appeals to them as possessing numerous attractions.

The existing price of freighting ore from Cracker Creek to Sumpter approximates \$2.50 per ton. Supplies hauled in cost an equal sum. The promoters of the Sumpter-Bourne railway obligate themselves to establish a freight rate higher in no instance than \$1 per ton. The road will therefore save, on every ton of ore shipped out, and every ton of supplies shipped in, the appreciable sum of one dollar and a half. It is this phase of the matter which appeals to Cracker Creek mine owners.

The E. & E. ships an average of ten tons per day of ore and concentrates to the Sumpter smelter. Under existing conditions, this costs the Bourne Gold Mining company \$25 per day, \$750 per month, or \$9000 per year. With a railway, the figures would be \$10 per day, \$300 per month, or \$3600 per year, effecting a saving of \$15 per day, \$450 per month, or \$5400 per year. Other Cracker Creek mines are not such heavy shippers as the E. & E., but their saving would be in equal ratio.

It is, of course, true that this tremendous saving in freight charges would in a large measure be subtracted from local circulation scores of teamsters operating between Sumpter and Cracker Creek would be deprived of an occupation. But this evil would be more than counter-balanced by the fact that the railway would cause the development of innumerable small new shipping mines, an increased output from the larger ones, and the consequent employment of more men, which would mean a larger payroll, the purchase of more merchandise from Sumpter stores, and, therefore, more money in local circulation.

It is the aim of the railroad committee to secure the larger part of subscriptions to the \$20,000 worth of bonds from the mine operators on the mother lode. If the building of the railway will result in a saving to the E. & E. of \$5400 per year, that company could easily afford to donate \$5000 toward the enterprise. In this case, however, it is not a donation. The bonds draw six per cent, and are redeemable after five years, with guaranteed payment within twenty years. It is conceded that within two years at most the bonds will be at par, and at all times they will be negotiable securities. As a glittered industrial investment these securities are possessed of attractions.

Locally, of course, merchants and business men will reap an inestimable benefit from the construction of such

a railway. These benefits are of too obvious a nature to need comment.

Upon receipt of the engineer's detailed estimate the committee will begin its campaign for subscriptions.

Robert E. Strahorn's offer to subscribe for \$1000 worth of bonds in the Sumpter-Bourne railway enterprise caused a local mining man to say last evening:

"This man Strahorn is, in my humble estimation, possessed of pretty nearly every one of those characteristics which make a good citizen. Without blare of trumpet, with no calcium lights and with no press agent, he has quietly done as much to build up the city of Sumpter as any man on earth. He has provided this town with a modern and up-to-date water works and electric light system, and is always in the front rank of progressive, public-spirited citizens. He subscribed \$100 to help the Sumpter Ore Exhibit association and now comes forward with a \$1000 subscription to the railway project. If all this doesn't spell good goods, I don't know what does."

"I'll just raise R. E. Strahorn \$250," said Seymour H. Bell to a Miner representative today, in speaking of Mr. Strahorn's public spirited liberality in offering to subscribe for \$1,000 of the Sumpter-Bourne railroad bonds. "I want to see that road built myself," he continued, "and am prepared to take and pay for \$1250 of its bonds. It is what Sumpter needs to save itself from dry rot and it behooves us all to get in and drill."

A mining man, in speaking to the writer regarding this proposition a few days since, said that although facts given in these columns some days since regarding the money which the shipping mines will save on transportation charges is a very convincing argument to induce the mines to subscribe for stock; a very much stronger one could be formulated if correct statistics as to the amount of money spent for timbers, and especially lagging, could be secured and the vast sums saved by shipping in timbers and slab wood, with reasonable freight rates prevailing. Slab wood is all right for lagging and can be bought here in Sumpter for a small fraction of what it costs to get it out in the hills.

This would be a great benefit to the smaller mines, those that are being developed and have no sawmill, as well as the more extensively operated mines.

Build that road, and build it 1905.

Grand spring millinery opening at Hotel Sumpter on April 3 and 4, by Mrs. E. L. Sullivan, of Baker City, who will display the latest modes in feminine adornment.